

In order to survey the blanket bog, it was necessary to produce new descriptive terms to define the micro-habitats, such as hummocks, sphagnum hollows, ridges and pools, both temporary and permanent. The distribution of *Sphagnum* species and other plants in these habitat types was recorded. Blanket bog is a globally rare habitat and the Flow Country has unique features that make it different from blanket bog elsewhere in Europe. Peat bogs elsewhere in Europe often have trees and are fed by snow-melt water. The Flow Country is virtually without trees, except where planted, and is kept wet by high rainfall. A party of experts from the International Mire Conservation Group was invited to visit the Flow Country. They agreed that the area was of great conservation importance.

This view was put to the Prime Minister and the Department of the Environment, urging a change in policy for the area. This was picked up by the press and other media, and it was also discussed in the House of Lords. The government responded by asking the Nature Conservancy Council to prove that the whole 400,000 hectare area was of global importance and gave them a year to do so. The team made use of the then new technology of computer mapping to present their information. This was used to show the distribution of rare plants and animals, and the effects that forestry and other land uses was having. The system was also able to produce models of likely future effects if drainage and forestry was allowed to continue. A well-produced case won the argument and the threat of more forestry effectively came to an end when Nigel Lawson withdrew the forestry tax benefits in his 1988 budget. The Flow Country is currently being proposed as a World Heritage Site.

SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

Agrilus sinuatus (Olivier) (Col., Buprestidae) new to Wales.—An exploration of the ancient parkland of The Hendre (SO463135), a few miles to the west of Monmouth in VC35 (Monmouthshire), 10.iv.1998, resulted in the discovery of the characteristic D-shaped exit holes of *Agrilus sinuatus* in a mature hawthorn. This is an addition to the Welsh list. Other wood decay Coleoptera noted during the visit include *Ctesias serra* (Fab.) (Dermestidae), *Xestobium rufovillosum* (Degeer) (Anobiidae), *Prionychlus ater* (Fab.) (Tenebrionidae) and *Phymatodes testaceus* (L.) (Cerambycidae), all from ancient oaks and all of very localised occurrence in Wales.

My thanks to The Rolls of Monmouth golf club for permission to enter the site.—KEITH N. A. ALEXANDER, 14 Partridge Way, Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 1BQ.

Hypulus quercinus (Quensel) (Col., Melandryidae) new to Gloucestershire.—Amongst the invertebrates found by the Gloucestershire Invertebrate Group in Pinbury Park (SO952052), near Edgeworth in E. Gloucestershire, 21.vi.1998, was a single specimen of *Hypulus quercinus*. It was found in a large decaying oak snag by John Harper. Pinbury Park includes a large concentration of ancient parkland oaks, plus a few ashes and field maples, all currently enveloped within mixed secondary woodland. This find represents the first wood decay species of any particular note from the site.—KEITH N. A. ALEXANDER, 14 Partridge Way, Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 1BQ.